

## Netherleigh and Rossefield School

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

December 2015

## 1 Aims and Objectives

- 1.1** Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our school, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths. We enable children to develop knowledge of the major world religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, especially those that are the main faiths of the children in our school and local community. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children to learn from religions as well as about religions.
- 1.2** Our main objectives in the teaching of Religious Education are to help children:
- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
  - increase children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other major religions and value systems found in this country;
  - develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
  - be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
  - develop an understanding of religious traditions and to respect the beliefs of those belonging to a different tradition;

## 2 The Legal Position of Religious Education

- 2.1** The school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education lessons if they so wish, although this can only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Headteacher. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the Headteacher in writing. It also promotes education for citizenship. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are mainly Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

### **3 Teaching and Learning**

- 3.1** We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.
- 3.2** Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their own knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences of religious festivals, such as Easter, Diwali, Eid, etc, to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.
- 3.3** Children study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues in peer and class groups. We also stress the need for respect and tolerance of differing views.
- 3.4** We recognise the fact that all our classes in school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:
- Setting common tasks which are open-ended, and can have a variety of responses;
  - Setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
  - Grouping children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
  - Providing resources of different complexity adapted to the ability of the child;
  - Using peer support – we partner pupils of disparate ability;

### **4 RE Curriculum Planning**

- 4.1** RE is a Foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We plan our RE curriculum using local and national guidelines, ensuring that all major faiths are included. We ensure that the topics studied build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- 4.2** Our curriculum planning is in three phases: long-, medium-, and short-term. Our long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each Key Stage and Year group. The RE subject leader works this out in conjunction with their teaching colleagues in each year group. In some cases, we combine the study with work in other subject areas, especially at Key Stage 1.
- 4.3** Our medium term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The geography subject leader reviews these plans as necessary. As we have mixed-age classes, we do the medium term planning on a two-year rolling programme. In this way, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the curriculum, but do not have to repeat topics.

- 4.4** Each class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. The class teacher keeps these individual plans, and can discuss them with the RE subject leader on an informal basis.

## **5 The Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 5.1** We teach RE in Reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged two to five.

## **6 The Contribution of RE to Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas.**

- 6.1 English:** RE makes a significant contribution to the teaching of English in our school because it actively promotes the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We ensure that some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening.
- 6.2 ICT:** We make provision for the children to use the computers as part of a RE topic where appropriate. Children use ICT to enhance their skills in data handling and in presenting written work. They research information through the Internet, for example accessing virtual tours or virtual books, such as the sacred books area of the British Museum website. We also offer children the opportunity to use the digital camera to record and use photographs.
- 6.3 PSHCE:** RE contributes significantly to the teaching of PSHCE. Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our wider and diverse society.
- 6.4 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education:** We offer children in our school opportunities to examine the fundamental questions, such as the meaning and purpose of life, through the medium of RE. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. Arabic classes are provided, after school, for the Muslim children to learn about their faith.

## **7 Teaching RE to Children with Special Educational Needs**

- 7.1** At our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. RE forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

## Religious Education Policy

- 7.2** We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning RE. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a trip to a place of worship, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

### **8 Assessment and Recording**

- 8.1** Children demonstrate their ability in RE in a variety of different ways. Younger children might act out a famous religious story, whilst older children could have a debate or research a particular topic. We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them in lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we give written or verbal feedback to help guide progress.
- 8.2** The class teacher keeps the children's RE work in their topic folders or books. The subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio.

### **9 Resources**

- 9.1** We have sufficient resources to be able to teach RE. We keep these resources in individual classrooms to teach each unit of work, and the library has a supply of RE books.

### **10 Monitoring and Review**

- 10.1** It is the responsibility of the Senior Management and/or staff as delegated to monitor the standards of children's work and the quality of planning and teaching in RE. This may also involve supporting colleagues in their knowledge and understanding, keeping up to date with developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school, as well as reviewing strengths and weaknesses, and indicating areas for development.